Development of the idea of security

“Security is the only one which necessarily embraces the future: subsistence, abundance, equality, may be regarded for a moment only; but security implies extension in point of time, with respect to all the benefits to which it is applied. Security is therefore the principal object.”

Jeremy Bentham

Abstract

Historically, the concept of security has been understood, interpreted and defined in different ways. In addition, it is a notion that has been, unlike any other, mentioned and studied in all branches of science, natural and technical, as well as social and humanistic ones. It is exactly due to the utilization of the concept of security in different areas of life, that it has been much more difficult to define it uniformly. Furthermore, it is the fact that the changes occurring on the international scene since the end of the Cold War caused the changes in ideas related to the security in general, and all its concepts. With referral to the previous, this paper points out that traditional concepts of security are no longer able to explain and deal with the complex nature of contemporary security challenges, risks and threats. That is why nowadays, when considering the security issues, there are numerous perplexities, such as the question whom the security needs to be provided for, who is responsible for security, who are those who impose the security threats, and what are the procedures, means and methods to have, preserve and enhance the security. The aim of this paper is to show how the concept of security has developed throughout the time and the different views and ideas of security occurring throughout the history.
**Introductory remarks**

The concept of security has been capturing the attention of humans and their community since the existence, but in modern times it has started being used in almost all areas of human activity. However, there are authors who warn that, at the same time, the concept of security has been one of the least discovered and defined notions, and therefore, in order to acquire the full understanding of this notion, it is necessary to study the basic categories of this concept.\(^2\)

Mid last century Arnold Wolfers pointed to the multidimensionality and complexity of the concept of security defining it as “an ambiguous symbol” which may or may not have any meaning.\(^3\)

The security, as a condition for the existence and activity of the individual, society, the state and the international community, is one of the fundamental social, i.e. state functions, as evidenced by the ever-going preoccupation throughout the history of mankind to achieve the security. However, multi-dimensional and complex concept, as it is security, has not had the same meaning throughout history.\(^4\) Namely, for centuries, the security has been studied as a very complex social phenomenon from various perspectives: philosophical, legal, political, social, economic, and so on. It is exactly that “…the study of the history of human society suggests that the issues of security of human life and property are among the oldest problems which a man has been confronted with and has tried to solve.”\(^5\)

**First ideas on security**

The first ideas on security can be found in the ancient philosophy, although the security at the time was not considered as a separate category, but instead

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was deduced from more general concepts, primarily from war and peace, i.e. the use of force, as well as the relationship between territorially organized and structured social communities (states), and afterwards from the concept of freedom and its importance for the man and society.

Of the ancient thinkers who discussed the notion and causes of the war should be pointed out Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. In his discussion of the establishment of a state, Plato tackled the causes of war by correlating it with the concept of the so-called ‘unhealthy state’. In fact, unlike so-called “healthy state”, where it is produced only what is needed, the unhealthy state is the one where not only needed things are produced and consumed, but also the luxury, unnecessary ones. This creates the need to have a new group of producers of those unnecessary things, and the land being sufficient to feed the citizens of the healthy state suddenly becomes insufficient for the citizens of the unhealthy one. According to Plato this is exactly where the cause of the war lies, that is, wars break out due to need to acquire the new land. Plato viewed the war as a law of nature, as a natural way of resolving disputes.

According to Aristotle states should strive to achieve the happiness of their citizens, which should be a primary national goal. A state’s attempt to subjugate the neighboring country is in opposition to the state’s law, and the conquest must not be set as one of its goals. On the other hand, each country must be ready to defend if attacked. State government must do everything to make the country inaccessible to the enemy and to be ready to defend itself if attacked. Aristotle argued that the military forces are not needed to the country in peace, but in times of instability and in war efforts should be made to make that military force as organized as possible. Also, Aristotle divided nations into barbarians and the civilized ones, and based on this division he defended the view that

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7 Namely, having perception of the freedom as the highest human ideal and versatile determinant of the development of man and society, ancient and medieval philosopher noted the connection between the freedom, security, and the state, according to which the state has two main objectives: common security and freedom as the freedom as putting limitations to violence that society or state may execute over individuals. Cited from: Mladen Bajagić, *Osnovi bezbednosti*, Beograd: Kriminalističko-policijska akademija, 2007. p. 2.


9 There were conflicting views that rejected and condemned the war. Such views were represented in ancient Chinese philosophy (Taoism), and among some Greek thinkers (Aristophanes, Pythagoras, the Stoics) who condemned the war because of its destructive nature, violations of moral and humanistic principles, incompatibility with sense and nature, and due to prevention to achieve universal human unity and harmony. Cited from: Dejana Femić Vukčević, “Razvoj ideja vezanih za bezbednost države i međunarodne zajednice”, *Politička revija*, Year (XVI) IV, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2005): p.159-172.

civilized nations can submit the barbarians. Hence, Aristotle is considered the oldest colonial ideologue.\textsuperscript{11}

Furthermore, in the period of medieval Christianity one can differentiate so-called just and unjust wars. Only just wars are the ones that can be undertaken since they lead to peace. The first who developed by the Christian doctrine of the right to lead a war is considered to be St. Augustine, who made a distinction between the offensive and defensive wars. While defensive war is justified, given that it is natural to suppress the violence with violence, the war of aggression must meet certain requirements to be considered for a just war (\textit{bellum iustum}). Thus, the decision on offensive war can only be brought by a legitimate government, and it should be initiated only for just cause and for establishing the peace.\textsuperscript{12}

Furthermore, Thomas Aquinas also discussed the issue of war and peace. Discussing the concept of the peace, he compared the peace with harmony, stressing that peace includes harmony, but differs from it. The concept of peace involves “mutual adjustment of our own aspirations with the ones of another people” while harmony makes closer the aspirations of different individuals. When considering the question if the peace is wanted by all human beings, Thomas Aquinas’ answer is affirmative, and he also adds that even those people who seek war actually want peace since they do not have it, and start wars to change the present state of harmony and turn it into a real peace. Examining the nature and issue of the war, he believes that three conditions must be met in order to considered war fair: the war should be conducted only upon the master’s command, there should be present a just cause of war, and there should exist the just intentions of those who wage wars - and that is to promote good and avoid evil.\textsuperscript{13}

Further considerations on war and peace were replaced by the ideas and theories in which state’s security is conditioned by its relations with other countries at the international scene. Two different directions may be noticed within this idea: the first one is based on the idea that the cooperation among states is the only effective mean to ensure the security of the state and to establish lasting peace, and the second, which is based on the idea of the need to strengthen national security through military power or force, states that only a strong and independent state can ensure its safety.\textsuperscript{14}


Thus we see that even in the middle ages some philosophers, lawyers, theologians and diplomats dealt with the issue of organizing the international community in order to consolidate peace, and the thing in common for them is the effort to achieve a lasting international peace by educating the supranational authority which could regulate relations between states.\textsuperscript{15}

It is assumed that the first work related to the establishment of states at the international level, with the aim to ensure universal peace, and where we find developed the idea of the so-called world state-monarchy, which stands opposite the kingdom, as a country with a limited area, is Dante’s “Monarchy”. In it, Dante points out the necessity to have a world state, a monarchy, which would be able to secure world peace\textsuperscript{16} and which would unite all other countries/states. For Dante, the highest goal of mankind is the peace as “the best of everything that has been given for our bliss.”\textsuperscript{17}

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century in his famous book “The Prince”, Machiavelli says that the security is the first and most important human concern and therefore a state should be governed by the one who is brave and who is able to fight for their own safety and that of community. In Machiavelli’s opinion, it was normal that each state aspires to rule over the others ones, which creates a permanent rivalization with the aim to maximize their welfare.\textsuperscript{18} All states are won by own or foreign weapon, through happiness, or courage.\textsuperscript{19} Analyzing military relations, Machiavelli argued that the civil army is much better than the privileged elite or mercenaries.\textsuperscript{20} Machiavelli puts the main focus on the power and the issue of its acquisition and maintenance. He provides the

\textsuperscript{15} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{20} Machiavelli wrote: “The two most essential foundations for any state, whether it be old or new, or both old and new, are sound laws and sound military forces. Now, since the absence of sound laws assures the absence of sound military forces, while the presence of sound military forces indicates the presence of sound laws as well. A prince can either have his own forces or rely on mercenary or auxiliary forces. Mercenary and auxiliary forces are useless and dangerous: and if one holds his state based on these arms, he will stand neither firm nor safe; for they are disunited, ambitious and without discipline, unfaithful, valiant before friends, cowardly before enemies; they have neither the fear of God nor fidelity to men, and destruction is deferred only so long as the attack is; for in peace one is robbed by them, and in war by the enemy. The fact is, they have no other attraction or reason for keeping the field than a trifle of stipend, which is not sufficient to make them willing to die for you.” Cited from: Nikolo Makijaveli, \textit{Vladalac}, Beograd: Dereta, 2005. p.54.
ruler with clear advice on how to ensure internal and external security of their country using the available funds therefore.21

Furthermore, Jean Bodin proposes the hypothesis that a stable government and order represent the largest social needs. In his book “Les Six livres de la République” Bodin identified the conditions necessary to ensure the state order, stating that a basic prerequisite for the state order is the state’s sovereignty which is the highest authority and does not depend on the subjects.22 All sovereign rulers are equal, and their power is unlimited since it is subject to divine law, natural law of reason and the law of nations. Bodin is the first author who defined sovereignty as a kind of absolute power in a state community. For him, the sovereign power of one state is limited by the sovereign power of the other ones. In terms of international relations, Bodin talked about two major rules: power and trust. In addition, he also advocated for strict obedience of international agreements. (*pacta sunt servanda*).23

The idea of security from XVII to XX century

The idea of security was also the heart of European political thought of the seventeenth century. It is an idea whose political significance, as well as the meaning of the word “security”, continually changed throughout history, mostly implying a condition and the goal of the individuals, groups and states. Thus, the most consistent idea of security at the time was that it was a condition or goal which creates a special relationship between individuals and the state.24

The position that the state is seen as a main provider of the security25 can be traced back to Hobbes’s concept of legitimate government that is created by the consent of the people through the social contract, all the way to Weber’s idea of the state’s monopoly to have the legitimate use of physical force. Together these attitudes represent the basic philosophical pillar of the state’s role in creating and maintaining a monopoly over the means of force. In fact, since the Westphalia peace agreement,26 signed in 1648, it has been adopted the idea that

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the state the one that must ensure and provide security to its citizens. The two main principles arising from this agreement are the sovereignty and equality of the nations. The state has, therefore, taken a monopoly on the use of force, in order to make its citizens secure and to ensure its sovereignty against internal and external threats.27

Thomas Hobbes, called “the theoretician of the security and order”28, in his Leviathan, states that the purpose of the state is to enable the individual security.29 In contrast, Leibniz (Gottfried Wilhelm - Leibniz) writes: “My definition of a state is that it is a great society with a goal to ensure common security.”30 While Montesquieu (Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu) sees the security both as a reflection of the definition of the state and the definition of freedom: “political liberty consists in security, or at least in the opinion of someone’s security.”31

According to the stated, the security is the goal of an individual. In its interest, individuals are willing to give up other goods. In other words, it is a wellbeing that depends on the feelings of individuals, i.e. the view one has on someone’s safety, which in turn enables the other feelings, including the ability of individuals to take a risk or to plan for the future. Also, Adam Smith, in his work, identifies the freedom and security of individuals as the most important prerequisites for the development of the public wealth. In his opinion, security means being free from the possibility to suffer a sudden or violent attacks on someone’s personality or property.32 In other words, in his “Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth”, Adam Smith pointed out that the only duty

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29 “I give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition; that thou give up, thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner. This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH; in Latin, CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him that, by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad.” See: Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan or the Matter, Form and Power of Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1885, Cited from: Branko Bošnjak i dr., Antologija filozofskih tekstova s pregledom povijesti filozofije, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1954. p.194-195.
of the state is to ensure the safety of the population. Therefore, the safety of individuals in terms of freedom from fear and personal injuries, was crucial to liberal political thought.

The term “security” gained a new public prominence in the early, liberal period of the French Revolution. Natural rights of man consisted of liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression. Thus, security was still the condition of an individual, but now, also, their natural right. In addition, the security, as one of the basic natural and imprescriptible rights of man, was pointed to in the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen from 1793. Article 2 of the Declaration states that the purpose of the society is to provide the happiness of all. Government exists for the sake of guaranteeing the enjoyment of human nature and imprescriptible rights, such as equality, liberty, security and property. In Article 8 this Declaration emphasizes that security lies in the protection that society provides to each of its members in order for them to protect their personal integrity, rights and property. Thus, the security is conceived in terms of freedom from personal threat, which was to be provided by the civil society. It means that the individual, or personal safety, in the liberal thought of the enlightenment, represents the personal and collective good. It is also the condition and goal of an individual, which can be achieved only in a kind of collective endeavor. This point of view is quite different from the perception of security as an internal state of the individual in the Roman political thought.

The new idea of security primarily as a collective good, which should be enabled by military or diplomatic means, is an idea that came to Europe during the period of revolutions and the Napoleonic Wars, and was different from previous concepts. Thus, the concept of security of the state, in terms of the protection from external military attacks, took a commonplace in political discussion in Germany (Sicherheit or assecuratio padis) in the eighteenth century,

35 The Constitution from 24 June 1793 or so-called The Second Declaration. In fact, after the abolition of monarchy in France, the Convent created a new constitution called Montagnard Constitution, whose introductory part consisted of a separate declaration of rights, so-called Declaration Jacobine. The Jacobin declaration kept the basic positions of the Declaration from 1789, but also added some significant updates, so the number of articles increased from 17 to 35. See more: Dragan Stojanović, Osnovna prava čoveka, Niš: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu – Institut za pravna i društvena istraživanja, 1989., p.26–27.
while in France, as well as in England, the collective sense of the word “sûreté”, “sécurité” and “security” represented an innovation which appeared at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁸

Later on, the safety of individuals was subsumed, as a political epigram, under the security of the nation. Thus Rousseau, like Locke and Montesquieu, described a social contract as a consequence of a desire of individuals to enjoy secure life³⁹ and liberty, and pointed out to it as a basic problem that state institutions should provide the solution to.⁴⁰ For Jeremy Bentham, security is seen as a condition for the general welfare, as a fundamental social goal, a political joy consisting of subsistence, abundance, equality, and security, of which security is the most important one.⁴¹

The first major public use of the word security in these new, i.e. national terms can be found even before the Congress of Vienna in 1814. The Allies initially signed for the Paris Peace Treaty, under which France once again was supposed to become the warrant of “security and stability” (un gage de sécurité et de stabilité) for Europe. One of the goals of the upcoming negotiations at the Congress of Vienna was to enable peace in the world, in other words, a new era was introduced when the great powers joined to restore the security of the throne (la sûreté des trônes).⁴²

According to the abovementioned, the period of European history from the treaty of Westphalia until the outbreak of World War II is considered the golden age of diplomacy, balance of power, alliances, and international law. Most of political thinkers in this period were focused on the sovereign nation-state, or its origins, functions, limitations of government, the rights of individuals within states, etc.⁴³ In the period between the world wars, appear the first considerations of the security within research and teaching disciplines and become known as security studies. After the world wars, the attention was paid to the theoretical considerations of democracy, national self-proclamation, disarmament and

³⁸ Ibidem.
³⁹ For Kant (Immanuel Kant), both individuals and states seek “calmness and security” in the law, or when speaking country, it’s about public safety (öffentlichen Staatssicherheit) of the cosmopolitan system. See: Hans Reiss (ed.), Kant's Political Writings, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. p.47-49.
arbitration as defining instruments for the promotion of international peace and security. From that period the security of the state has been traditionally referred to as national security, regardless of the distinction between the terms state and nation. It is believed that it was first used by Walter Lippman in 1943, in his book “American foreign policy” citing that “the nation has security when it does have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and when it is able to maintain them by war if provoked”, which again became the standard term for this concept of security after the Second World War, tying it to the integrity of sovereign states.

The period of Cold War was a period of great nuclear confrontation between East and West, and was filled with fear of nuclear catastrophe. At the same time, during this period, it became notable the weakening of the citizens’ security. The attention of the police and judicial system was often focused on preventing and combating political crime and actions of so-called the internal enemy of the state. Human rights and freedoms were not only ignored in many countries, but were the object of the structural violence, i.e. a systematic and ruthless endangerment and violation. Thus, it happened that the security of the state strengthened at the expense of that of people.

It can be concluded that, from its inception, throughout the period of establishment of the modern international system of states, as well as during the entire period of bipolarism, the reality of security was conquered by almost exclusively military terms, while the main object and the subject of security become a sovereign state. A key to achieve, preserve and improve security at any level

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45 From this distance we can say that “its use is not entirely correct, given that it marks the security of the state. Therefore, the term national security, which was less used, was actually more appropriate because it marks the security of national values and interests, primarily sovereignty, state existence and that of society, the constitutional order and the public order. This is because the phenomenon nation is most often wider (geographic) than the notion state, and due to the fact that a country does not have to be national, or to coincide with the territorial propagation of nations.” Cited from: Saša Mijalković, Nacionalna bezbednost, Beograd: Kriminalističko-polička akademija, 2009. p.79-80.


and of any subjects of security was, consequently, in the hands of the state. The idea of security during these three centuries was observed through the state security, that is, as a concept of national security, whose central part implies an existence of a sovereign state, its survival, territory and sovereignty as vital values and interests protected through its military capacity. Therefore, this concept is referred to as a state-centric and orthodox. The primary tool of protecting the state lies in its power. This power was generally considered the military one, but also the economic power. One part also referred to the joining to certain associations thus gaining the possibility to overcome the size and destructiveness of active and potential threats imposed on the state or its allies. In fact, security is identified with the so-called the external security of the country.

Modern notions of security

Modern comprehension of security is dominated by two concepts, namely: universality - implies respect for the integrity of the term security, and demilitarization - which allows overcoming the idea of the state security being exclusively connected with the military force.

Namely, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of bipolarism affected the understanding of the concept of security, and particularly important discussion was conducted on the nature and significance security. One group of authors insisted on the extension of the concept of security suggesting the integration of new, broader potential security threats, such as economic development, environmental degradation, human rights violations and large migratory movements, as well as other wider potential threats. Another group of authors, starting from the wider dimensions of security, insists on deepening the agenda of security studies, including a number of segments such as individual security or human security, national security or the society security, all the way to the regional, international and global aspects of security issues. On the other hand, the third group of authors, staying faithful to the traditional state-centered approach to security issue, identifies new aspects of definition of security (common security,
collective security, cooperative security, etc.), creating new theoretical models of multilateral interstate security relations, which could lead to resolution of the security issues in international relations.54

In addition, the end of the twentieth century was marked by global changes that have contributed to the actualization of the process of transferring traditional power which only state was entitled to on the private sector. In other words, nowadays it has been spoken and written more about the privatization of security55 as a widespread and accepted phenomenon, than it has been the case in any other previous period in the history of the modern nation-state. Peter Singer, one of the most famous authors dealing with this subject, points out that it is clear that the trend of privatization of security has gone too far, too fast.56 We are witnessing that various companies, individuals, international organizations, NGOs and even the government use the services and put the increased confidence in the private sector, allowing it to take care of their security.57 So, after nearly four hundred years the state and its institutions are no longer the only actors entitled to take care of the external and internal security of the citizens.58 Westphalian system of nation-states, as the undisputed pillar of the international order, has been now replaced by much more complex reality where we are faced with the privatization of the war and conflict59, while security system acquired a new sector, a private one, which was established and operates on commercial basis. The theory states that this new model of providing military and security services enables the governments and public institutions to increase efficiency by concentrating only on the most important tasks, while the responsibility for the performance of less important tasks is transferred to the private security sector.60 Therefore, nowadays we have, besides the state, some other

subjects which are significant for the security and which operate internally, but also on the international scene, whether as individuals, social and private groups, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and so on.61

Concluding Remarks

Since the beginning of human society, the war, due to its consequences, has been considered the greatest danger and threat to human society, and therefore, the security was observed, all the way to the end of XX century, as a goal that is realized by combining military and diplomatic means. Therefore, the problem of security was only restricted to military matters, and was tackled through military activities, while other types of security were ignored. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, the man became more aware of other dangers that come from the natural and social environment, which also threaten every man. Finally, at the beginning of the XXI century, the security started being seen as a determinant of survival, i.e. as a condition that creates a relationship between the individual, society and state.62

Given that security is a dynamic phenomenon, the changes can be noticed regarding the values to be protected, the sources and forms of threats that jeopardize these values, the subjects that are threatened, as well as operating ways and means of the agencies responsible for guaranteeing security.

Therefore, the security of the individual, society and the state has been given a new meaning in modern civilization. The current relations and changes within modern states, but also relations among states, require a new approach to security that will take into consideration all of its aspects as equally important, primarily including non-military means and mechanisms in security-related activities. In the current cultural and civilizational relations security has universal significance, which is clearly expressed in the necessity to have integrity and inclusion of all areas of life in a certain state or society (economic, political, social, environmental, military, defense, etc.), as well as to reach increased connectedness and interdependence of global society.63

Sources


